MARIE BURROUGHS—STUART ROBSON—
ERNEST HASTINGS—AUBREY BEATTIE—
HUDSON LISTON AND GERTRUDE PERRY
IN "THE GAD FLY."

THE FUNNY GIRL— NOT FROM PARIS.

By Alan Dale.

THE rewards of the humorous actress may not be as great as those accruing to the dazzlingly svelte and auriferous peroxided "beauty" actress. But they last longer. You see, they are not dependent upon the whims of sexual caprice. You can appreciate the funny lady when you're old and respectable and have ceased to care whether a woman's curves are north or south of her tummy. The young woman about to go on the stage, never, invariably hankers for "serious work," in which she can blight or be blighted, ruin or be ruined, be the mother of her Reginald's cheevild by fair means or by foul (foul preferred). She forgets the fun-ice, when, with charms dimmed, she has nothing left to play but black alapaca mammas, haughty dowagers or the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet." What will become of our darling serious actresses in the distant future? What will Maude Adams, Julia Arthur, Mary Mannering and Maxine Elliott be thirty years from now?

The humorous actress lasts longer, and all this pretty little preamble is nothing but a "lead up" to that quaintest of funny ladies, Annie Yeamans, who is now at the Madison Square Theatre. The funny lady occurs very rarely in a season, and I always make the most of her, as perhaps you remember. It is the serious ladies who threaten my life and invite me out to be whipped. The funny ladies all love me, because—unless their hearts!—I love them.

You needn't go abroad for funny ladies. They are an American article, and they belong to thoroughly native conditions, which are clean and salubrious, and non-sexual. In French farces, like "The Girl from Maxim's" and "In Paradise," there is no simplicity of character drawing. Everything is concerned with the little game of sex. In "The Girl from Maxim's"—which must be seen between the ages of seven and twenty-seven—the "funny lady" is laboriously built up from a cocotte who dances at one of Paris's childishly evil resorts, and is then thrust, unprepared, into "exclusive" society. You smile, because it is a shock to your system. In the other farce, "In Paradise," the feminine humor centres around a lady addicted to "badger" pursuits, who supports a sweetheart upon the results of her nefarious schemes (isn't "nefarious schemes" gorgeous and police-court-y?), and is happily unconscious of a single unsophisticated moment. Young and comely women play these parts. Josie Hall and Minnie Seligman are both pleasing to the eye (although I'll do Miss Hall the justice to say that she is always willing to make herself hideous at a moment's provocation.

Mrs. Yeamans, however, makes us laugh by means of a simple character sketch that has nothing whatever to do with sexual emotion. This is a more difficult, more artistic and more enduring effort than that put forth by the French farces. And it appeals to you when you are in a respectable humor. Every man—the gay young spark of sixty-five and the blase old thing of two-and-twenty—has his moments when a laugh extorted from his diaphragm by means other than the perpetual play upon abandoned women and abandoning men comes as a whiff from the meadows of—er (no, it isn't Hunter's Point I mean) but—er—What-d'ye-may-call-it-on-the-Hudson. They don't understand these moments in Paris. When a man is too young or too old to feel interested in the cheerful themes of adultery, blackmail and the like he is not worth bothering about. He is the minority, and should either be sent out en nourrice or be shipped to Charenton.

The well-regulated and the ill-regulated minds can laugh at that inimitable cook in "Why Smith Left Home." There are no side issues. Mrs. Yeamans is not one of those young old ladies whose chief aim in life is to shear the whitening hair and bolster the declining figure. In fact, I can't imagine her as Juliet even when she was sixteen (if she ever was sixteen). She doesn't ask you to look at her gowns or to admire the wonderful preservation of her form. She dons the garbs of a Bridget, and with the grimaces of a figure from a comic valentine she portrays one of the so-called humorous types of our daily life. It is real humor, bubbling from a clear spring—humor that is unconscious of itself.

We get precious little "character" on our modern stage. There is no time for its elucidation. The effects of acting must be quick, and it is "situation" that the playwright relies upon. Yet "character" always tells, and when we get a Rose Melville or an Annie Yeamans to laugh at we are quick at detecting the genuine ring of the laughter. The cook in "Why Smith Left Home" is really more spontaneously humorous than the cocotte in "The Girl from Maxim's" or the badger woman in "In Paradise." You have met the cook in your own real, sad life; you have encountered the cocotte and the badger woman in French literature.

Mrs. Yeamans's Lavinia Daly is a caricature, of course. Yet the cook-lady, who can take a juvenile beefsteak and make it taste like a leather boot, and who can so deftly manipulate a Spring chicken as to cheat its grandfatherhood to the bird that went with Noah into the ark, is familiar to New York householders. And when Lavinia remarks, "I'm a lady. Kindly introduce me to this person, so that I can speak to her," she strikes a note in your inmost heart. Cooks have not yet refused to work with "scabs," but in these times of abnormal trades unionism what is coming who shall say? And how you laugh when, after hearing that a foreigner is coming to stay with the family, she demands an increase of wages "because cooking for two nationalities is agin the rules of the union."

This is real humor, as it is portrayed by Mrs. Yeamans. As I said the other day, Mr. Broadhurst should go down on his bended knees and thank Mrs. Yeamans for the help that she has given to his work. Even that little incident of blowing the tissue paper from her visiting card was carefully thought out by this funny creature. The whole picture is worthy of a frame as Mrs. Yeamans sets its forth.

The rewards of the funny woman are not as great as those accruing to the dazzling Venuses, with alabaster shoulder-blades and colossal legs. But they last longer. In France, as soon as a woman is old, she is made to play henpecking wives and joyously-duped matrons. In New York she sinks to the depths of the dowager and the harmless old lady, or, if she has been a potent star, rushes into vaudeville and takes the bread out of the mouths of acrobats and jugglers and other horny-bodied sons of variety. But the funny woman can go on being funny as long as she has the wit to do so. You couldn't shelve Mrs. Yeamans if you tried ever so hard. There are dozens of types right in our midst that she could impersonate. She does not begin and end at a cook. Perhaps the cook is the most picturesquely funny feature of our lives just now, but there are others that are distinctly worth illuminating. There are some feminine types that I could mention if I liked (but why should I give my valuable ideas away gratis?) who are simply cut out for Mrs. Yeamans's art. They are unconsciously amusing. Women are never consciously amusing. They are naturally serious, dignified, and anxious for that goal which is prettily called "settling in life." But it is the unconsciously amusing people that afford the best scope for the humorous pen. There is not much use in weaving wit around a buffoon or an aggressively mirthful person. It is the serious women who cater to such actresses as Mrs. Yeamans.

And I say that a little attention to humorous character drawing would be an extremely good thing for our stage. It would oust us from the thraldom of French farces, with the'r odors of patchouli and musk and barroom. It would relieve us from witticisms that would have made the pot-boys of England's last century blush for very shame. And—better than all—it would give American funny men a legitimate chance to be funny. It has been said that the American humorist, popular though he be, at home and abroad, has scarcely ever descended to play writing. Why? Because the farces all come from abroad, and managers look askance at wit that fails to deal with 's underwear and gentleman's pajamas.

ALAN DALE.

NEWS FROM THE THEATRE.

IN the newness of next week's productions that will attract particular attention is "The Tyranny of Tears" at the Empire Theatre on Monday evening and "Becky Sharp" at the Fifth Avenue on Tuesday.

In "The Tyranny of Tears," with which Mr. John Drew will begin his eighth season since he left the Augustin Daly Company to become a star under the management of Charles Frohman, he will be seen in a play which was tried by Charles Wyndham at the London Criterion Theatre and won favor. It was written by Haddon Chambers, and is briefly defined in the play bill as a comedy of temperament.

Mr. Drew will appear as Mr. Parbury, the part Mr. Wyndham created in London, and will be assisted by Arthur Byron, Harry Harwood, Frank Lamb, Ida Conquest and Isabel Irving.

Not to conflict with the "first night" at the Empire, Mrs. Fiske has deferred her opening until Tuesday.

It is doubtful if any lover of Thackeray's novels has failed at some time to wish a transfer of one of his stories to the stage. Even when the actors do not ideally fill the conception formed of the characters, there is something in the play that more nearly appeals than the book itself. The only difficulty has been so far in dramatization, both of Dickens and of Thackeray, that the wealth of plots in their stories has been too great to embody in a play, and instead of transferring one of their entire novels to the stage one of their great characters has been selected as a pivot around which to wind a small part of the incidents.

This Mr. Langdon Mitchell has done out of the wealth of material in "Vanity Fair." He has taken Becky Sharp in her maturer adventures and only introduced those characters that are associated with her in the novel.

Becky is certainly one of the most remarkable figures in fiction. She is the very epitome of deceit; she combines a malice of nature with infinite spirit, audacity, cleverness, energy and will, and the playwright has certainly had a hard task in realizing the combination.

Thackeray himself seldom recounts Becky's talk—her flashes of wit. He merely says that she was brilliant and set every one laughing; suggestions rather than a finished portrait of her actions.

Miss Grace Heyer, who was a member of Mr. Richard Mansfield's company last season, has been ill with appendicitis, and has been unable to open with Daniel Frohman's "White Horse Tavern." She will, however, be able to join the company a week from to-morrow, at Chicago. Miss Heyer's face is familiar to the Journal readers as one of the series of stage beauties, features of the Sunday Journal last Winter.

Among other novelties later in the week is a dramatization of Charles Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities," which will be produced at the Herald Square Theatre as "The Only Way." The play, which also had a London run at the Lyceum Theatre, adheres closely to the lines and incidents of the famous novel, and will give Mr. Henry Miller an excellent opportunity to show his dramatic powers in a new field as Sydney Carton.

Mr. Frohman has surrounded Mr. Miller with a cast purposely to equalling the London production, and for it has drawn upon nearly every one of his companies to find those exactly fitted for Dickensonian parts. E. J. Morgan, by courtesy of Daniel Frohman, will play the dual roles of Jean and Ernest de Farge; J. H. Stoddart, of the Empire company, will play Mr. L—; Margaret Anglin, the Roxane of "Cyrano," will play Mimi; Daniel Harkins, of the John Drew Company, Dr. Manette, and George Irving, of Maude Adams's company, Vicomte de St. Evremont.

Daly's Theatre will also open on Wednesday, when Charles Frohman will inaugurate his management with a revival of the romantic drama, "The King's Musketeers," in which Mr. E. H. Sothern has been seen as Dumas's celebrated hero.

In a fortnight William H. Crane's new play, "Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New Amsterdam," will be presented at Providence. At the Broadway Theatre Jacob Litt has decided to open "The Ghetto" September 25.

Owing to the great length of "Becky Sharp" the curtain at the Fifth Avenue Theatre will positively rise at 8:15. Edward E. Rice to-night institutes in the Casino Theatre a series of popular Sunday night vaudeville concerts, which will be known as Rice's Sunday Night "Pops."

AUGUSTUS P. DUNLOP.

REMARKABLE STUDY OF ANNIE YEAMANS IN CHARACTER POSE, IN "WHY SMITH LEFT HOME." PHOTOGRAPHED ESPECIALLY FOR THE SUNDAY JOURNAL

FROM "THE GIRL FROM MAXIM'S."

AT THE THEATRES

ANNIE RUSSELL AND "MISS HOBBS."

By Miss Jessie Wood.

MISS ANNIE RUSSELL, who has often complained of being tied to her stage sunbonnet strings and wanted a chance to assert herself as a full-blooded female adult without a dialect, had her opportunity last night. She was not required to weep, to endure want and penury, to mend her little brothers' trousers or to be behindhand with the rent. Her gift of being charmingly lachrymose, her special talent of weeping with a nose only slightly pinkened, was as entirely lost as though it had been trick bicycling or clog dancing. In short, sad to relate, Miss Annie Russell was not Miss Hobbs, and her very feathers lacked the necessary vitality.

"Miss Hobbs" is a play written by an Englishman in which the conjugal question is treated very Englishly. Jerome K. Jerome is the writer, and he presents his hero—the Englishman—as a gentleman who preaches a long sermon of platitudes to the girl he woos. He ells her that the work of woman is to bear children and feed man, and that American women are "dolls who sit at home and think," and he orders her about with the authority of a shop walker and provides her with manual labor.

Miss Hobbs is supposed to be a man hater, and if she had been presented as a spirited, tailor-made, independent sort of a girl the situation might have been possible. But no man with the spirit of a weasel would bully or preach at Miss Russell, make her grind coffee or light a fire. Who could preach platitudes to a girl who looks as though she has just finished an appointment at the dentist's or paint the delights of motherhood to one who suggests that she would not even talk of an incubator?

Imagine Miss Russell as an aggressive and saucy spluster, independent and apparently rich. She must be rich, for the homes of most saucy spinsters with "views" that I know are chiefly furnished with Japanese fans and soap boxes, and their "cozy corners" are anything but habitable. Miss Russell's home has gilt furniture and a piano and a boy in buttons. Here imagine Miss Russell living unchaperoned, trying to separate her women friends from their husbands and lovers.

If the hero had been any other man than Charles Richman—who really looks like a gentleman and not an actor—I think that preaching hero who tamed the independent thinking Miss Hobbs would have been hissed. You see, all the gentlemen in the audience were so thoroughly accustomed to going downtown and earning diamonds for their wives and leaving the population to get along as it can, that the idea that the ladies should reciprocate with offspring and cookery struck them as primitive and entirely wanting in chivalry.

But an actor can rob a role of a great deal of its offensiveness, and Wolff Kingsearl, Major, trying to tame a 'new woman" by ordering her about like a scrub woman was not as bad as it might be in the hands of Charles Richman, who looks as though he would much rather not be dogmatic.

Clara Bloodgood, who now stands on her merits and can dispense with the stories of her noble origin, was a young married woman whom Miss Hobbs attempted to set against her husband. Mrs. Bloodgood behaved very sweetly and sat down on a cotton-backed satin sofa as though she had never been used to anything better. She was extremely good, and second only to Mrs. Gilbert in merit. Mrs. Gilbert played a wise and merry old lady—a real sport—though I should like to see any manager cast Mrs. Gilbert for a disagreeable character. All the theatre-going public would rise up in revolt.

Orrin Johnson was the young husband who boxed his wife's ears (Mr. Jerome thinks nothing of a little thing like that), and he played tempestuously in a velvet coat. Miss Mabel Morrison looked extremely serious, as though she was trying to solve the marriage question, and Joseph Wheelock, Jr., as George Jessop, her sweetheart, decorated a simple part with a halting nervousness. T. C. Valentine played a small part cleverly.

But "Miss Hobbs"—well, it was all good but Miss Hobbs. The lines are not brilliant, but they have the brightness that one encounters in genial suburban people who struggle not to be epigrammatical. The situations are not astounding, but gently stimulating. But Miss Russell is not the woman to tame; she is not the woman, as Richman exclaims, that one could hunt tigers with.

Let the man who hunts tigers with her take a good store of nerve-killer.

JESSIE WOOD.